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LETTER DATED 12 MARCH 1999 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have the honour to forward herewith a letter dated 12 March 1999 addressed to you by Kiro Gligorov, President of the Republic of Macedonia, concerning the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force (see annex). I should be grateful if you would bring the contents of the letter to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Naste CALOVSKI
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex

Letter dated 12 March 1999 from the President of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia addressed to the Secretary-General

We received the news of the results of the recent vote in the Security Council on the extension of the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP) mission in the Republic of Macedonia with feelings of great regret and disquietude. It was truly painful for us to learn that United Nations peacekeepers will have to end their noble mission. More so in the light of the present circumstances, when their presence in the Republic of Macedonia is perhaps needed most, at the moment when the crisis in Kosovo is seriously threatening to escalate and spill outside the framework of our neighbouring Yugoslav province and at the moment when the international community is putting in enormous efforts to find at least a temporary solution for a peaceful settlement of this crisis.

Nevertheless, the results of the vote of the Security Council remain a fact. The Republic of Macedonia is facing a major challenge to its security, and at the same time the challenge of contributing to preserving peace in the region.

I avail myself of this occasion to underscore the continuous readiness of the Republic of Macedonia to join the coordinated efforts of the United Nations for a peaceful settlement of the Kosovo crisis. Consequently, we remain open to the possibility of the presence of United Nations peacekeeping forces on our territory, with the aim of coming out of this crisis and achieving a stable peace and security in the region.

The ending of the UNPREDEP mission is at the same time a major motive for me to express the sincere recognition of all the citizens of the Republic of Macedonia, together with my personal acknowledgement, of the great contribution of the United Nations in preserving the peace and security in the Republic of Macedonia and in the surrounding areas in the course of its six-year presence. UNPREDEP will remain written in history as the first and authentic preventive mission of the world Organization, as a joint effort of the United Nations, countries participants in the Mission and the Republic of Macedonia for preventive action for protecting peace and security in the world. And most importantly, UNPREDEP confirmed itself in the long term as a barrier to wider destabilization and thus as a very successful mission.

As is known, Security Council resolution 795 (1992) of 11 December 1992 established the peacekeeping mission in the Republic of Macedonia with a preventive mandate as part of the United Nations Protection Force in the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Security Council resolution 983 (1995) of 31 March 1995 set up UNPREDEP as an independent mission with a preventive mandate. From the very outset to the last Security Council resolution, 1186 (1998) of 21 July 1998, which extended the mandate of UNPREDEP until 28 February 1999, about 10,000 peacekeepers and military and civilian personnel took part in it and honourably served the goals of peace.

Esteemed Mr. Annan, on this occasion I cannot but mention your personal contribution to the successful operation of UNPREDEP, as well as that of your predecessor Boutros Boutros-Ghali. Worthy of our recognition are the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General, Yasushi Akashi, Henryk Sokalski and Fernando Martin Valenzuela Marzo, as well as Hugo Anson, Ataul Carim and many other devotees to peace. We also owe our gratitude to many successful commanding officers, starting with Brigadier General F. Saemark Thomsen to the last commanding officer, the Norwegian Brigadier General Ove Stromberg. I have nothing but the highest appreciation for the thousands of American, Norwegian, Swedish, Finnish, Danish and Indonesian troops and their Governments, the many civilian enthusiasts who served the peace, and who together with us stood firm and determined in protecting the causes of the world Organization. I cannot but mention the difficult challenges they faced, first as a result of the major war effort in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the dangers of its spilling over into the wider region, later as a result of the destabilized internal situation in Albania, and most recently the growing crisis in Kosovo.

Furthermore, I would like to make mention of the excellent cooperation between UNPREDEP and its representatives on the one hand and the Macedonian authorities and citizens as a whole. The peacekeepers were received as our own, as a part of our daily lives, because they truly deserved it. In addition to carrying out their primary tasks, they expressed a remarkable readiness to cooperate with the local population, to offer and give assistance in some difficult moments, to help out in building roads and in many other humane actions.

Finally, esteemed Secretary-General Annan, allow me to ask you to convey our wholehearted appreciation to all participants in UNPREDEP, from its beginning to its end. At the same time, I avail myself of this opportunity to ask you to convey to them our high recognition and feelings of friendship, together with our genuine wish for their continued good health and future success. I would like to believe that the experience acquired with their presence in the Republic of Macedonia will prove beneficial for other parts of the world, in the interest of the peace, security and prosperity of the countries members of the United Nations.

In closing, allow me to reiterate our great appreciation for your tireless engagement in the service of peace and stable development throughout the world and to wish you good health and renewed success in the execution of your responsible duties. Furthermore, esteemed Mr. Annan, allow me to express my pleasure at the announcement of your pending visit to the Republic of Macedonia. I genuinely rejoice at the pleasant opportunity I will soon have to welcome you here and the opportunity we will have to exchange views on the situation in the region of South-East Europe.

(Signed) Kiro GLIGOROV